

Connecticut General Assembly
Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing Testimony STATE LIBRARY BUDGET

February 22, 2023

Written Testimony on Behalf of the Connecticut State Library H.B. No. 6659.

My name is Audra MacLaren and I serve as a trustee of the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC). I am writing in support of H.B. 6659 and the maintaining of full funding for the Cooperating Library Service Unit (CLC) line item within the Connecticut State Library budget.

CLC is a state legislative program and cooperating library service unit funded by the Connecticut State Library. It helps libraries throughout the state by supporting the purchasing of digital resources, database, and other services at the lowest possible prices.

As an executive director and librarian in the quiet corner of Connecticut for over 18 years in a public library, Connecticut Library Consortium has been a critical financial component for small rural libraries in the Northwest Hills of Connecticut.

CLC helps both school and public libraries save many dollars a year. I rely on the discounts they negotiate for libraries. CLC also affords a large expanse of professional learning opportunities and support that are otherwise too costly for small libraries. CLC offers librarians a place to expand their professional growth, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and find assistance for supporting initiatives. CLC offers an opportunity for librarians to expand their network, to feel supported and to stay current with best practices in the profession.

The failure to adequately fund CLC next year would have an adverse impact on our ability to continue to provide my community with dynamic, lifelong learning services. As an association library, we depend on both the generosity of donors and our town funding. In a time of increasingly tight budgets and high inflationary costs, Connecticut libraries and their constituents need these discounts and services more than ever.

According to CLC reports, Gunn Library in FY 21-22, realized savings of \$15, 895.55 through their discounts. We saved on services such as programming, supplies, technology, books, and professional support. This savings is invaluable to our budget, community, and staff—the overall health of our organization. Can you imagine the loss to our libraries if we could not have these savings? Our communities would not receive the same level of services and assistance. Please support and maintain the full funding of CLC.

Audra MacLaren
Executive Director, Gunn Memorial Library
Washington, Connecticut